

SYNONYMY AND ANTONYMY IN PROVERBS OF THE KHOREZM DIALECTS OF  
THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

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**Abstract:** This article explores the phenomena of synonymy and antonymy in the proverbs of the Khorezm dialects of the Uzbek language. The study aims to identify how semantic relations are realized in paremiological units and to determine their functional and stylistic roles. Using semantic and contextual analysis, the research examines synonymous and antonymous proverbs and reveals their contribution to expressing evaluative meanings and figurative thinking. The findings demonstrate that synonymy enriches the variability of expression, while antonymy intensifies contrast and enhances the didactic impact of proverbs. The results contribute to a deeper understanding of the semantic structure of proverbs and their significance within Uzbek paremiology and dialectal linguistics.

**Keywords:** Khorezm dialects, Uzbek paremiology, synonymy, antonymy, proverbs, semantic relations, dialectal linguistics, figurative meaning

**INTRODUCTION**

Proverbs in the Khorezm dialects of the Uzbek language represent a rich and expressive layer of oral folk creativity, reflecting the cultural, social, and ethical values of the people. As stable linguistic units, they encapsulate collective experience and convey generalized judgments about human behavior, social norms, and life situations.

One of the central issues in paremiological research is the study of semantic relations such as synonymy. In proverbs, synonymy is manifested through different lexical and structural forms that express similar meanings, thereby enriching the expressive potential of folk speech and demonstrating the diversity of linguistic representation.

In contrast, antonymy is based on semantic opposition, which intensifies expression and highlights evaluative contrasts. Oppositional pairs such as good and evil, wealth and poverty, or wisdom and foolishness reflect the dualistic perception of reality and play a key role in conveying moral lessons and shaping the worldview of speakers. This article aims to analyze the manifestations of synonymy and antonymy in the proverbs of the Khorezm dialects, identifying their semantic and stylistic features.

**Synonymy** In linguistic theory, synonyms are generally defined as words that share identical or closely related meanings but differ in stylistic coloring, usage, or contextual scope. Extending this concept to paremiology, synonymy in proverbs refers to units that express similar or nearly identical meanings, even though they are constructed through different lexical and structural means. Despite formal variation, such proverbs convey the same underlying idea or message. This can be further illustrated by proverbs such as: *Baqqaniñ ikki ečki, oşqirganiñ yer tebrätär* and *Bärgäniñ bir jumırta, oldirdiñ durtä-durtä*. These proverbs are typically used in reference to individuals who exaggerate or boast about actions that, in reality, carry little significance. Despite their differing forms, they share a common evaluative meaning and function within the same semantic field, reinforcing their status as synonymous paremiological units. A similar semantic relationship can be observed in proverbs such as *Görmägänni gördi gäda, jurakı jarilib oldi gäda* and *Görmägänni görgäni qursin*. These paremiological units convey the idea that a person who has previously lacked opportunities, when suddenly attaining wealth, power, or



social recognition, may fail to manage such changes appropriately. As a result, such individuals may lose self-control, exceed acceptable limits, and engage in inappropriate behavior. Despite differences in form, these proverbs share a common semantic core and reflect a critical attitude toward sudden, unregulated social advancement. Likewise, proverbs such as *Kambayal gijsa nerdän aldij, baj gijsa qutli olsin* and *Kambayalni dujanı ustindam it qapar* illustrate another thematic group, expressing the idea of social inequality and injustice. These proverbs convey the notion that poor, weak, or socially vulnerable individuals are often subjected to humiliation and mistreatment regardless of their circumstances. Even if they temporarily improve their social position, negative attitudes toward them tend to persist. Thus, these examples demonstrate how synonymous proverbs not only reflect shared meanings but also embody broader social and cultural perceptions embedded in folk consciousness. Another illustrative example can be found in the proverbs *Qara sıyiram aq süt bäradi* and *Qara tavuqam aq tuxum bäradi*. These paremiological units, grounded in folk wisdom, convey the idea that a person should be evaluated not by external appearance, origin, or superficial attributes, but rather by their practical contribution and positive actions. Despite their figurative simplicity, such proverbs reflect a profound ethical principle embedded in the public worldview. Such synonymic variation reflects semantic diversity and expressive richness in paremiological units.

**Antonymy** Antonymic pairs are among the most frequently used linguistic devices in proverbs and are typically expressed through words belonging to the same grammatical category, such as far–near, friend–enemy, and big–small. In proverbs, antonyms serve to juxtapose opposing meanings, thereby intensifying expression and enhancing their stylistic and semantic impact. Thus, proverbs function not only as expressions of lived experience but also as an important source for the study of key linguistic concepts such as antonymy. In addition, antonyms play a significant role in the full interpretation of proverbs, particularly within figurative and metaphorical relationships. In folk proverbs, antonymic contrasts are often expressed through symbolic elements such as animal imagery. For example, proverbs like *Tüja mänzilni goradi, esak ajaqini tejni* (“The camel sees the destination, while the donkey looks only at its feet”) and *Esak minib tujaq tejni gormä, tüja minib uzaqni gözlä* (“Do not look at the ground when riding a donkey; when riding a camel, look into the distance”) illustrate opposition through metaphorical representation. Similarly, antonymic relations are reflected in evaluative characteristics, as seen in expressions such as *Jaxsi gap – juräk jayı, jaman gap – juräk dayi* (“A good word is nourishment for the heart, a bad word is a wound to it”). In such cases, opposition serves as the basis for conveying meaning, reinforcing both the expressive and didactic functions of proverbs. The phenomenon of antonymy in the proverbs of the Khorezm dialects can be clearly observed at the structural level of these units. The use of words with opposing meanings enhances the expressiveness, persuasiveness, and overall impact of proverbs, making them more vivid and memorable. This can be illustrated by examples such as *Jaxsi adam asini jidi, jaman adam basini jidi* and *Jaxsini izinnan qama, jamanni qizini ama*. In these proverbs, the opposition between “good” and “bad” is explicitly realized, forming the core of the semantic contrast. Through such antonymic pairs, human qualities and moral characteristics are evaluated and interpreted. When analyzing the term “good,” it can be understood as encompassing meanings such as “a virtuous person” or “a righteous individual,” while the notion of “bad” functions as its direct semantic opposite. This opposition reflects a broader conceptual framework in which the world is often perceived through the dichotomy of good and evil. Consequently, proverbs frequently rely on such contrasts to convey moral lessons and to structure folk understanding of human behavior and social norms. For this reason, proverbs reflecting the opposition between good and bad are particularly abundant. Such contrasts are deeply rooted in folk cognition and serve as a



fundamental means of expressing moral evaluation and life experience. This tendency can be observed in proverbs such as *Köplik olib ish ätsän, azliq olib avqat jesän; Ulli eşakarva nerdän jürsä, kiççi eşakarva şardän jürädi; and Yaş getmän döp, qarrı olämän döp qorqıtadi*. These proverbs illustrate various forms of antonymic opposition, including contrasts such as intelligence versus foolishness, bitterness versus sweetness, presence versus absence, abundance versus scarcity, and youth versus old age. Through such oppositions, proverbs convey generalized life truths and reinforce culturally significant norms of behavior. Thus, antonymy serves not only as a linguistic device but also as a key mechanism for structuring meaning, intensifying expression, and transmitting ethical values within the framework of folk discourse. The use of antonymic elements within the structure of the above-mentioned proverbs not only contributes to their rhythmic and phonetic harmony but also enhances the strength and expressiveness of meaning. Such oppositional relationships intensify the communicative impact of proverbs and reinforce their didactic function. This can be further illustrated by the proverbs *Qıstangan qız ärä jalçimas* and *Otrgan qız ornini tapar*. In these examples, opposing ideas are clearly expressed through contrasting semantic implications. The first proverb, when interpreted literally, suggests that a girl who rushes into marriage may make an unfortunate choice. In its figurative sense, however, it functions as a broader warning against haste, emphasizing the negative consequences of impulsive decision-making. The second proverb also contains both literal and figurative meanings. Literally, it conveys the idea that a modest, patient, and well-mannered girl who remains at home will eventually find her proper place in life, including happiness, marriage, and family. Figuratively, it promotes the values of patience, self-respect, and restraint, encouraging individuals not to act hastily or undervalue themselves. Thus, these proverbs demonstrate how antonymic opposition can operate not only at the lexical level but also at the level of broader conceptual and interpretative meaning, enriching both their semantic depth and cultural significance.

### Conclusion

The study of the lexical-semantic and functional-stylistic features of antonyms in proverbs is of particular importance, as it provides valuable insights into the culture, traditions, customs, worldview, and national values of the Uzbek people. Through such analysis, proverbs reveal not only linguistic structures but also the deeper cultural meanings embedded in collective experience. Moreover, by expressing oppositions inherent in significant human situations and phenomena, as well as internal conflicts within individuals, antonymic structures in proverbs are closely linked to the axiological dimension of language. In this sense, they serve as a means of articulating value-based judgments and highlighting the evaluative nature of human perception and thought. The analysis of antonyms in proverbs yields significant conclusions for the fields of Uzbek lexicology and semasiology. Proverbs serve as an important source for enriching the antonymic lexicon and contribute to a deeper understanding of the structural and semantic development of lexical units. Through such analysis, it becomes possible to trace patterns of semantic evolution and the functional potential of lexemes within the language system. As noted by Novikov, “antonymic relations are deeply embedded in the language,” highlighting their fundamental role in structuring meaning and expressing evaluative contrasts. In this regard, proverbs provide a particularly rich material for examining how such relations operate within both linguistic and cultural

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